

TESTIMONY FOR PUBLIC HEARING, MARCH 11, 2022

To Environment Committee Chairmen Sen. Christine Cohen, Rep. Joseph Gresko, and Distinguished Members

And

Transportation Committee Chairmen Sen. Will Haskell, Rep. Roland Lemar, and Distinguished Members

HB 5039 AAC Medium and Heavy-Duty Vehicle Emissions Standards
SB 4 AAC The Connecticut Clean Air Act

SUPPORT

Thank you for holding this joint hearing and for the opportunity to comment on these extremely important air-quality bills.

As longtime advocate for protection of Connecticut waters, I learned that air-quality problems translate almost immediately to water quality problems.

The 2018 Connecticut Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, in which the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection tracks emissions from 1990 to 2018, shows Transportation as the worst, most polluting sector studied. It was the only major economic sector whose greenhouse gas emissions increased (!) during this period.

The state has mandated emission standards for most cars but trucks and other medium- and heavy-duty vehicles (such as buses) have been exempt. Common experience and commonsense tell us that this is a mistake. Drivers on Connecticut roads are repeatedly subject to throat-burning toxic fumes from trucks entering their vehicles. One can try to pass the noxious offender or drop back a quarter mile for relief. The more public-friendly trucks release their emissions higher in the air. But those emissions quickly descend and cause the same harm to health and the environment.

In vehicle emissions, the constituents of most concern are nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide. Nitrogen deposition in estuaries and coastal waters causes algae growth, hypoxia, and eventually large dead zones.

Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide together are the notorious cause of acid rain, forming sulfuric acid and nitric acid in the atmosphere. Sulphur in fuels is no longer the acute problem it was in recent decades, thanks to required reductions in heating oil and vehicle fuels, including diesel fuel. But sulfur dioxide is still present in small quantities in vehicle emissions. Even small quantities are cumulatively significant.

Acidic rain severely harms forests, agricultural crops, soils, fresh water, and aquatic life.

Vehicles also emit carbon monoxide carbon dioxide, hydrocarbons, particulate matter and formaldehyde.

Particulate matter is probably the obvious danger to human health, but all emission toxins take their toll.

Water is called the universal solvent. More substances dissolve in water than any other medium. EVERY CONSTITUENT IN VEHICLE EMISSIONS WILL EVENTUALLY AFFECT WATER QUALITY.

Please pass HB 539. It is urgently needed now. The companion bill, SB 4 also addresses atmospheric pollution and equally deserves strong support.

Thank you for your work on these pressing matters.

Margaret Miner. Consultant
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